



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## *Marine Resources Commission*

380 Fenwick Road

Building 96

Fort Monroe, VA 23651

Travis A. Voyles  
Acting Secretary of Natural and  
Historic Resources

Jamie L. Green  
Commissioner

February 6, 2023

### MEMORANDUM

TO: VIRGINIA OYSTER INDUSTRY

FROM: VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION

SUBJECT: RAPPAHANNOCK RIVER ROTATION AREA 4 CLOSURE

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**Effective 12:00 P.M., Friday February 10, 2023, the public oyster Rappahannock River Rotation Area 4 will be closed to harvest by Commissioner Action.**

The Oyster Replenishment Department has made the determination that the standing stock of oysters in the Rappahannock River Rotation Area 4 will meet the closure criteria by February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023 and should be closed to conserve long-term oyster resources.

This determination is based on the stock assessments conducted jointly by Virginia Marine Resources Commission and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. As established in Chapter 4 VAC 20-720-30 "Standing Stock Criteria", "Any public oyster ground or unassigned ground may be closed to harvest by the Commissioner of Marine Resources, when it is determined by the Oyster Replenishment Department that the standing stock of oysters has been depleted by 50% or more.". Based on the survey conducted on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023, ~47% of the standing stock of oysters had been removed from Area 4 during the open season. Given the anticipated effort in this area, it is probable that the 50% threshold criteria will have been exceeded by February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

The Commission took recent emergency action to extend the public oyster harvest season in areas located in both the James and Rappahannock Rivers. This supportive action helps Virginia watermen and industry continue the harvest of wild oysters, and will ensure that marketable oysters will be available for harvest from areas that continue to show late season productivity.

*An Agency of the Natural and Historic Resources Secretariat*

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